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EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION OFFICE
WINTHROP, IOWA

EARED GREBES NESTING IN NORTHWEST IOWA

By CHARLES E. FRILEY, JR. and GEORGE O. HENDRICKSON

Department of Zoology and Entomology
Iowa State College

From time to time frequent perusal of portions of the 'Revised List of the Birds of Iowa,' by Philip A. DuMont (1933), continues to stimulate us to new observations. For instance, when we read that DuMont "knows of no recent breeding records" of the Eared Grebe (*Colymbus nigricollis californicus* (Heermann)) in Iowa a few of us who are privileged to work at times in the lake and marsh region of the north-west counties began to look over the grebes of the marshes more closely. DuMont also tells us that the Eared Grebe is an uncommon migrant throughout the western half of the state, somewhat rare in the eastern portion. Later, in the May, 1934, issue of 'The Oologist,' which was devoted to an article, 'The Breeding Birds of Iowa,' DuMont gives a short report from Logan J. Bennett that Eared Grebes nested at Green's Slough, Clay County, in the summer of 1933. Dr. R. M. Anderson, in 'Birds of Iowa,' published twenty-six years earlier than DuMont's revision, says that the Eared Grebe appears to be somewhat locally and irregularly distributed in Iowa, although common at certain points, and gives breeding records from Hancock County for the years 1902 and 1903, as observed by B. H. Bailey at Eagle Lake.

Perhaps, records of nesting Eared Grebes were not available to DuMont because bird observers had not visited the right places or had not kept complete records. Or, were these grebes in reality so few in number during the intervening years that none remained to nest in our state? We can readily understand that excessive drainage of marshes in the years between the two issues of Birds of Iowa left the grebes with much less suitable environment. If we look into Arthur C. Bent's 'Life Histories of North American Diving Birds,' National Museum Bulletin Number 107 (1919), we read that formerly on western lakes of the United States Eared Grebes, tame and easily killed, were slain in great numbers, their breasts stripped off and dried to be sent east for use as trimming on wearing apparel. Bent also tells us that because the Eared Grebe nests were close together in colonies the eggs were easily collected, frequently gathered for food and even salted down in brine for future use. After the checking of such nefarious practices by 1919 he states the grebes were holding their own and possibly increasing in numbers.

In the summer of 1934 a small colony of Eared Grebes nested on Green's Slough, Clay County, but no detailed notes were made concerning the observations at the time. When in the summer of 1935 a larger colony of this grebe was found on Mud Lake, about five miles east of Green's Slough, a more detailed study was made of the birds. This slough contains an abundance of algae, pondweeds and similar submerged vegetation that supports directly and indirectly large numbers of insects, tadpoles and small frogs which make up the major part of the diet of Eared Grebes according to Bent. The colony was located about 125 yards from the east shore of the marsh in a rather thin stand of bulrushes (*Scirpus occidentalis*). The nests, 17 in number, were 5 to 31 feet apart. They were loosely constructed affairs made mostly of fresh vegetation pulled from the bottom of the marsh. There was little or no mud in the structures and within a few days after hatching of the young grebes the nests fell apart.

Because the colony was not found until after laying was completed it was impossible to secure any data on the period of incubation. According to Evans, as quoted by Dr. T. S. Roberts in 'Birds of Minnesota,' the incubation period is about 24 days. In number the eggs ranged from two to four in a nest. One nest contained two eggs, each of eleven had three, and each of four nests held four eggs. As the young were hatching in the seventeenth nest when it was found,

the number of eggs in the original clutch was not known. Out of the total of 53 eggs, three were collected for study and as specimens for the Iowa State College Museum, 43 hatched, six contained dead embryos 20-23 days old, and only one egg was infertile. Of the four nests that each contained four eggs in the original clutch, three hatched out completely and the fourth hatched three young. Of the eleven nests that contained three eggs each in the original clutch, six hatched out completely, four hatched a total of eight young, and the eggs of the remaining nest were collected. In the nest that had only two eggs, one egg hatched out and the other contained a dead embryo of about 20 days. All of the dead embryos in eggs except the one aforementioned were found floating in the water near the nest. Perhaps these eggs were pushed out by the adults as they climbed on and off the nests. This suggestion is supported by evidence of one egg that was crushed at the head end and found floating very close to the nest.

At each of the nests except three the young hatched at the rate of one per day until the hatch was completed. Hence it is assumed that incubation started with the laying of the first egg and that the eggs were laid at an average rate of one per day in all but the three excepted nests. Out of these three nests, two that contained three eggs each hatched out in four days. The third nest, which contained four eggs, hatched out in seven days.

It seemed remarkable how soon after hatching the young could leave the nest. During the whole period of observation only two Eared Grebe chicks were seen at the nests.

The first nest hatched out on June 23, five days before any other nest in the colony hatched, and the last nest hatched out on July 10. The total period for hatching of the colony was approximately two and one-half weeks. It is interesting to note that the seven clutches which hatched on or before July 1 hatched out completely. Only three clutches that hatched after that date did so well.

After hatching was completed, the grebes moved about 200 yards south of the colony into more open water and were seen there daily for several weeks.

During the incubation period the birds were very shy. When an observer came upon them hurriedly they left the nests uncovered. Generally the grebes were aware of the approach by man while he was yet many rods away and they had time to cover the eggs with moist plant debris before leaving. Almost always the birds slid into the water, dove and swam some distance away before coming into view again. After an observer had spent one or two hours at the nests the grebes became restless and began to swim toward and around the colony, apparently anxious concerning the welfare of the eggs. Upon withdrawal of man from the area and when he was only about six rods away the birds returned, swam around the nests with a watchful air and shortly clambered up to uncover and sit on the eggs. After hatching it was well-nigh impossible to follow the parents and young through the rushes. It has been noted by many observers that the young are carried on the adults' backs away from intruders.

A study of a plot of the nests in order of hatching and their positions on the lake furnishes clues as to the order in which they may have been built. From this study it appears that the nests were built in semicircular arrangement from the first nest as a center. That is, a few feet from the first nest appears a semicircle of the next three nests, farther out is a semicircle of five nests, and then one, or possible two, semicircles of the remaining nests.

A small colony of Eared Grebes nested on Green's Slough again in 1936, but on the day that it was visited a cold and heavy wind arose and we did not care to remain on the water long enough to secure an accurate count of the nests. But we shall continue to watch yearly for the Eared Grebe nests and try to determine the status of their numbers from year to year.

BIRD-BANDING (PART I)

By MR. AND MRS. M. L. JONES

Pomeroy, Iowa

Why doesn't some public-spirited individual make an investigation regarding avocations? It would be interesting to know what sort of psychology is in operation when a business man with sedentary habits takes up stamp collecting for a hobby, or a city mailcarrier pursues golf for his recreation. It isn't difficult to understand why the reverse might take place if one really wants a change for both the body and the mind. In our occupation we like to break the monotony of the week's work with now and then a trip to the woods or thicket where we can get all the outdoor exercise we desire, and do it at no expense to wild life.

A familiar proverb reads, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," but a bird lover's motto is, "A bird in the bush is worth two in the hand." The bird-bander can have both—the bird in the hand, and when liberated, in the bush.

The question is frequently asked, "Why band birds?" "The solution of problems concerned with the distribution and migration of North American birds is the primary object of bird-banding. A great many problems are at hand for the attention of each coöperator, any one of which, when worked out to a logical conclusion, may furnish the basis for an important contribution to ornithological science. The questions given below may suggest possible fields of investigation for individual station operators or for two or more stations operating in the same region.

"Personality—Do individual birds have peculiarities in appearance, habits and manners? (Banded birds are individuals and should be studied as such. Some will be wild, others tame and gentle; some will always fight, others will scold or squeal; some will exhibit courage or daring, others will show fear; some will give characteristic notes or even sing under stress of excitement. All of these and many other items have a bearing upon bird psychology, and should be watched for and carefully investigated.)

"Longevity—What is the normal length of life of the different species as shown by yearly return records?

"Migration—What are the arriving and leaving times? What is the effect of weather upon daily movements? Is the same route followed in successive seasons? Is the same route followed in spring and fall flights? Is travel continued daily or only when weather conditions are favorable? Do males, females and young travel together, or if separately, which comes or goes first? Is there much return to the same nest or nesting locality?

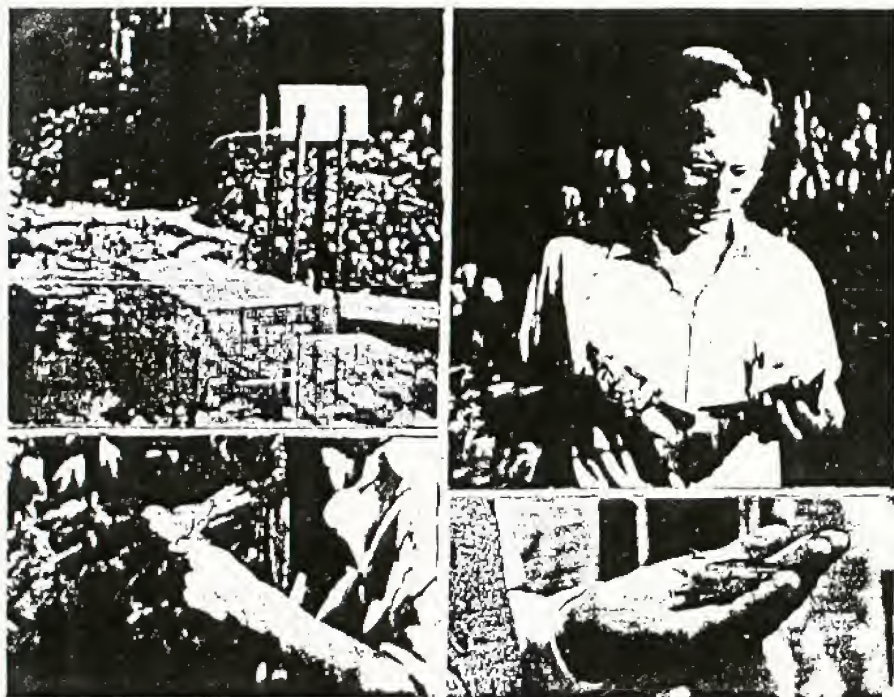
"Territory—What is the range limit during breeding, winter, or other seasons? What are territorial limits about nests? Do both birds defend the territory?

"Dispersal—What are the facts in connection with dispersal of young that do not return to the area where they were hatched? What proportion of males and females return to the same nesting sites? When leaving the nest do the parents keep the young in the nesting locality or lead them into adjacent territory? How strong is the homing instinct of different species?

"Ecological preferences—What are the reasons for preference of different types of environment, and can different species be attracted away from the preferred type? Is the preferred habitat valley, upland, mountain, marsh, shore, etc.? What species are adaptable to changes in environment: that is, are plastic?

"Family groups—What is the length of time that the unity of the family is preserved?

"Permanent residents—Are so-called 'permanent residents' the same



SCENES AT A BANDING STATION

Upper left: Banding "set" showing drip can and traps. Upper right: The bander, M. L. Jones, with a Cardinal in each hand. Lower left: Yellow-billed Cuckoo banded and released but not aware that he is free. Lower right: Slate-colored Junco in the hand—"hypnotized."

individuals or is there a movement of greater or lesser extent in such species?

"Other problems for investigation may deal with mating activities, plumage, weights and measurements, temperatures, parasites and diseases." (Manual for Bird Banders—Frederick Lincoln.)

In our banding activities we have been fortunate enough to capture an unusually large number of different species but we have been chiefly concerned about two groups of birds: (1) the woodpeckers, nuthatches and chickadees; and, (2) the various members of the sparrow family which are especially common to this area.

We are especially interested in the first group and while they are more difficult to trap in great numbers than are the sparrows and many others, they more than make up for this in the daily and seasonal regularity with which they come back to the trapping station.

While it is merely a coincidence, it seems worthy of note that so many of our "firsts" have been retaken as "repeats" or "returns." (A "repeat" is defined as any individual bird which is recaptured soon after the original banding; a "return" refers to the recaptures occurring three months or more after the original banding.) For example, our first Flicker was trapped at the nesting hole June 12, 1933. It was observed entering the top of our chimney late in the evening of July 15. After dark the chimney was covered; thus on July 16 our first Flicker gave us the first repeat we have on our records. This same individual returned June 10, 1934.

Our first Red-headed Woodpecker, banded June 12, 1933, returned June 3, 1934, being recaptured at the same nesting hole. It repeated August 13 the same year while feeding the young of the second or

third brood, but a new mate had been acquired. This same Red-head was trapped last summer (June 13, 1936) not a hundred yards from the old nesting site. It appeared a little weary of being trapped, however, and managed to get by with the old "gag" used sometimes by humans—that of "being out." After several unsuccessful calls we resorted to a little strategy and called after bedtime, placing an automatic type of trap over the entrance. Before five o'clock the next morning the trap was occupied.

Our first Hairy Woodpecker was banded December 11, 1933, with the number C-333335. She was taken in a large trap placed on the ground and baited with cracked walnuts. She returned March 14, 1935, and repeated on May 1 and 28 of the same season. The recaptures were all made in a trap placed on the side of a tree trunk over a suet feeder. In our experience with the Hairy Woodpecker we observe that they are somewhat trap-shy. Out of 18 banded birds we had 6 repeats and 8 returns, whereas 30 Downies furnished 41 repeats and 9 returns.

Our most cherished record is that of a female Downy which was captured March 24, 1934, repeating on April 7, and was taken about six weeks later (May 21) in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Our first Downy Woodpecker broke the spell of "our firsts" and never showed up again, but the second one banded the same day, and in the same trap, did his best to make up for it by repeating seven times in the month of May and returning once (April 30) the next spring. A male Downy, No. 34-240755, banded March 14, 1935, repeated 16 times in one season—13 times in May. He was captured on the following dates: March 14, 25; April 29, 29; May 3, 10, 10, 13, 15, 15, 16, 23, 25, 25, 26, 27, 29. We have taken no female Downy more than four times.

We have been successful in baiting only the last two species of woodpeckers. Farther south one would probably be more successful, but we have baited and captured only five Red-bellied Woodpeckers and five Red-headed Woodpeckers. The Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers will come to the feeding station, thus subjecting themselves to trapping, but apparently one must go after the others. We have captured 22 Red-heads by various methods but only the 5 mentioned above at feeding stations.

There are no suitable wooded areas for woodpeckers within 16 miles of Pomeroy so their numbers here are limited. One pound of suet here would supply them for the winter, but we try to keep four suet feeders filled along a wooded stream in Webster County. Thus far this winter we have used 20 pounds of suet, and probably a bushel of walnuts. A pound of suet in a feeder there will scarcely last a week, even though no Blue Jays have been observed.

Nuthatches and Chickadees are probably the greatest bait consumers. They are not satisfied with eating their fill, but hide away great quantities of it for a "rainy day." This is mainly the reason for their popularity at feeding stations, however, and no less a factor in netting us many interesting recoveries. Of those banded, about one-third of the Chickadees and Nuthatches (White-breasted) have been recaptured. In the accompanying table you will note that the repeats and returns total 40 while only 35 were banded.* A few individuals repeating several times causes the apparent contradiction. It would be an easy matter to run up a big record of repeats for these birds if there was any particular object in so doing. For winter trapping we usually convert our automatic traps into "pull-string" traps controlled at will from within the house. In this way we avoid catching the same individual over and over, also enabling us to keep the traps cleared for unbanded individuals. Partly because of this we have captured no one Chickadee or Nuthatch more than ten times.

*This table will be published in Part II of this article, in our June issue.—Ed.

That vivacious little ball of feathers—the Chickadee—has the courage of a lion when he is captured. While the damage he can do is slight, a pinch from that tiny beak can make anyone say "ouch!" His every action indicates that he would like to take us apart.

Nuthatches, on the other hand, will sometimes wait patiently to be taken from the trap. Our last Nuthatch (at this writing) was banded December 16, 1936, repeating four hours later. On January 11, 1937, it was again captured and escaped within the house. As we were trying to recapture it the bird flew against a large window with such force that it was stunned and we thought it was dead. Having seen a Chickadee do this, never to revive, we feared the same for our pet Nuthatch. However, in a few minutes it began to show encouraging signs and soon tried to escape from the cage. It was liberated at once and since then has been a regular caller at the lunch counter, repeating January 15, 23, 30 and February 10 (1937). In fact, almost any day we want to pull the trigger string we can recapture it.

We usually consider that the Hairy, Downy, Nuthatch and Chickadee are permanent residents. Our records on this point would not be very convincing, although they do not cover sufficient time or numbers to be at all conclusive. Out of seven Hairies captured during the winter season (Dec., Jan. and Feb.), one returned in May; Downies—winter, 13—May, 0; Nuthatches—winter, 22—May, 0; Chickadees—winter, 23—May, 0.

GENERAL NOTES

Migrating Hawks and other Birds.—On November 15, 1936, Mrs. Harold Peasley and I drove to Booneville in Dallas County. The Rough-legged Hawks were certainly on parade for us. As many as six were in the air at one time. Some flew as we passed, some settled on the ground to rest, while beyond a hill, along the ravines, in the trees, and on fence posts were several others. I usually see one or two at this time of year, but to see 15 or more was a genuine thrill. We also saw several Marsh, Red-tailed, Sparrow and Red-shouldered Hawks, but they were much less numerous than the Rough-legs. We saw nine or ten Short-eared Owls, and as we drove home in late afternoon we stopped to hear three Barred Owls calling. A Great Blue Heron at a little horseshoe lake, a beautiful jack rabbit and the sight of my first skunk in Iowa feeding in an open field, completed the day's discoveries.—KATE E. LA MAR, Des Moines, Iowa.

Bird Studies at Cedar Rapids.—During 1936 the composite list of the Cedar Rapids Bird Club numbered 183 species observed in this vicinity. Among the unusual birds recorded were the Western Grebe, Eared Grebe, Whistling Swan, Black Duck, Bald Eagle (mature), Golden Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Woodcock, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Long and Short-billed Marsh Wrens, and Lapland Longspurs. Purple Finches are again enjoying feeding-stations here, and there are more Red-headed Woodpeckers wintering in the city than ever before (January, 1937).—C. ESTHER COPP, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The Mockingbird at Clarinda.—The Mockingbird visited our locality for the first time, so far as I know, on July 8, 1936. It was a long gray bird with a mark on the wing. It was not at all timid and flew from the barn to a tall tree beside the house. There it sat on a dead branch where we could see it distinctly. The bird returned on four other days and was seen and heard all summer just south of us in an orchard. It sang the Cardinal's song and tried to improve upon it, and imitated the Phoebe, Blue Jay and others. The size, markings and music identified our visitor as the southern Mockingbird.—MRS. J. S. TAGGART, Clarinda, Iowa.

Feeding the Birds at Burlington.—Beside our southeast-corner porch are four white oaks on which are suet-cups and a suet-box with a platform. These attract the Downy, Hairy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. The Flicker and Brown Creeper stop on the platform. A swivel feeder on a post near by where we put an ear of corn and sunflower seeds, and a hanging feeder where we put nut meats and seeds, attract the Cardinal, Titmouse, Nuthatch and Chickadee. We put bread and table scraps on a stationary tray, and on the ground under the trees we throw feed; here the juncos, Cardinals, Blue Jays and sparrows feed in harmony. The Blue Jays and sparrows visit all the trays. The Starlings have visited us, but only during the winter.

In the summer Catbirds, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Robins and Brown Thrashers have dined at our trays. The feeding of these birds is one of our greatest joys. Some persons have been able to attract the oriole, but we haven't been so fortunate. We have almost two acres of ground, on which are many trees and shrubbery, and we have a river view. We have good shelter for birds during the winter.—MRS. ERNEST W. HANSON, Burlington, Iowa.

Magpies in Pocahontas County.—On November 7, 1936, while driving just west of the Webster County line in Pocahontas County, in a lively snowstorm—our first for the season—Mrs. Jones and I noticed a large flock of Lapland Longspurs. Just as we passed these a large bird fluttered awkwardly into an apple orchard, giving us only a fleeting glimpse of what we were quite sure was a Magpie. A sudden application of the brakes, followed by a spurt in reverse, was futile as no bird of any size could be found. However, on November 15, while within a mile of the same locality, I observed at different times probably a dozen Magpies. One stopped for a moment in a tree just overhead. They have been reported in that locality by hunters for some years, but my first observations were made two years ago, though previously I had not seen more than one.—MYRLE L. JONES, Pomeroy, Iowa.

Magpies in Western Iowa.—The invasion of Magpies into western Iowa during the winter of 1936-37 was very pronounced. During November, 1936, they were to be seen on almost any trip into the wooded areas along the Missouri River in Woodbury and Monona Counties. The first record I had for the season was of one seen in Monona County west of Blencoe on October 9; on the next day I heard two a few miles north of this spot. In company with Raws Jenson I saw two near the Denison highway, about six miles southeast of Sioux City on October 29. I had no further opportunity to go out until the middle of November. In the meantime Magpies were seen daily by State Conservation Officer W. W. Trusell. On November 15, Mr. Trusell and I took a little trip through the western part of Woodbury County and saw a total of 21 Magpies. We collected one specimen, a female. On this trip two Great Horned Owls were seen, one of which was also collected. We also saw five Starlings, but were unable to collect a specimen. This latter bird is becoming more abundant. I had nine records for 1936.

On November 21, C. Jauran, a farmer living near Salix, was attracted to a small wooded plot by the chattering of a number of Magpies, which he found to be harrying a Great Horned Owl. The owl had a broken wing. He stated that, while making a great disturbance, the Magpies showed a great respect for the owl and were very careful not to get within reach of its powerful talons. Mr. Jauran captured the owl and kept it at his farm; the bird was able to thrive on a diet of Crows shot for the purpose. The owl was given one Crow a day and it ate ravenously. It began its repast by pulling the Crow's head off with its talons.—BRUCE F. STILES, Sioux City, Iowa.

Magpies in Northern Iowa.—I have just received (January 8, 1937) a Magpie caught in a steel trap in Worth County, four miles west of Northwood. I have mounted the bird and have it in my collection. I have observed more Magpies this season than ever before. There were three Magpies caught in this same baited mink set within a week.—F. H. DAVIS, State Conservation Officer, Clear Lake, Iowa.

The Christmas Bird Census.—DUBUQUE, IOWA (Dubuque, Eagle Point Park and vicinity, north to Durango), Dec. 27, 1936; 8:45 a. m. to 3 p. m. Cloudy; brisk northwest wind; ground muddy; temp. 38 degrees at start, 33 at return. Observers together. Red-shouldered Hawk, 1; Bob-white, 7 (1 covey); Herring Gull, 2; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Red-headed Woodpecker, 7; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 4; Blue Jay, 6; Crow, 2; Chickadee, 14; Tufted Titmouse, 5; White-breasted Nuthatch, 7; Cardinal, 3; Goldfinch, 10; Slate-colored Junco, 25; Tree Sparrow, 16. Total, 16 species, 112 individuals.—ETHAN A. HEMSLEY, WOODROW RADLE.

FAYETTE COUNTY, IOWA (unpastured timber land along Turkey River, most of the territory near Clermont and Elgin), Dec. 27, 1936. Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Ring-necked Pheasant, 4; Great Horned Owl, 2; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 4; Red-headed Woodpecker, 6; Hairy Woodpecker, 4; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Blue Jay, 46; Crow, 43; Chickadee, 34; White-breasted Nuthatch, 23; Brown Creeper, 3; Northern Shrike, 1; Starling, 28; English Sparrow, 233; Cardinal, 15; Purple Finch, 18; Goldfinch, 89; Slate-colored Junco, 22; Tree Sparrow, 251. Total, 20 species, 829 individuals. There are large numbers of Red-headed Woodpeckers wintering in the oak timber in this locality, and several Robins have been reported. Palas saw one on January 2 and 10, 1937.—ARTHUR J. PALAS, BRUCE WEBSTER, ROBERT BURLING (Postville Nature Study Club).

TAMA, IOWA (5 miles north and 5 miles west through Indian Reservation), Jan. 1, 1937; 9 a. m. to 3:30 p. m. Mostly clear; strong east wind; temp. 25 degrees. Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Broad-winged Hawk, 1; Marsh Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 1; Flicker, 2; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 4; Blue Jay, 5; Crow, 15; Chickadee, 22; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Brown Creeper, 1; Robin, 1; Cardinal, 26; Slate-colored Junco, 12; Tree Sparrow, 45. Total, 17 species, 144 individuals. Since the severe winter of last year we have not seen a pheasant; at one time I counted 29 pheasants along the same road. Flocks of Starlings, three and four groups of 30 or more birds, were common the last few years. Not one have we seen for eight months or more. Starlings fed at nearly every feeding table in Tama last winter, although there were always sick ones among the group, and some died on the tables. The Tufted Titmice are gone this winter, as well as the Meadowlarks. Last year 21 Meadowlarks were seen along the roadway on the census trip.—MR. AND MRS. W. G. MACMARTIN.

WHEATLAND, IOWA (in woods along Wapsipinicon River), Dec. 24, 1936; 1:30 to 3:30 p. m. Bright sunlight; temp. 54 degrees. Two miles on foot. Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 2; Red-headed Woodpecker, 24; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Blue Jay, 4; Crow, 16; Chickadee, 9; Tufted Titmouse, 3; White-breasted Nuthatch, 5; Red-winged Blackbird, 11; Cardinal, 7; Goldfinch, 9; Slate-colored Junco, 7; Tree Sparrow, 30. Total, 14 species, 130 individuals (besides uncounted English Sparrows).—C. ESTHER COPP.

(The February issue of 'Bird-Lore' contained Iowa censuses from Backbone State Park, Des Moines, Ogden, Pierson and Sioux City, with a combined total of 46 species. Des Moines, with 13 people reporting, had a list of 35 species; Ogden, with but 3 observers, had a list of 28 species. We regret that we do not have space to mention the various unusual birds listed from Iowa. We refer our readers to this issue of 'Bird-Lore' for complete information.—Ed.)

The Nesting of Double-crested Cormorants on Green Bay.—On June 8, 1936, the Messrs. Koch, Killinger, Benson and I were looking over the Green Bay area in Lee County, Iowa, to ascertain whether or not it would be possible to remove at least a portion of the coarse fish population to provide better pole and line fishing. This area constitutes, roughly, 14,000 acres of land. High taxes made it virtually impossible for the farmers to continue the water evacuation in the drainage area and, consequently, the large pumps were shut down. In the course of a few years approximately 7,000 acres of land behind the levee adjacent to the Mississippi River became flooded with from 3 to 20 feet of water. A considerable portion of the shallow waters have grown up to smart weeds and other aquatic and semi-aquatic plants which attract a multitude of water fowl and shore birds.



DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS

on their nest in the Green Bay area adjacent to the Mississippi River in Lee County, Iowa. This photograph, by Supt. of Fisheries E. B. Speaker, shows a pair of adult birds brooding their young, with another cormorant nest above them in the same tree. At this time, June 8, 1936, the young were only a few days old. Note the cormorant in the air in the background: this shows a characteristic flight pose.

Near the lower reaches of the lake we observed a heavy concentration of Double-crested Cormorants in a clump of old dead willow trees. Being an enthusiastic camera-lover, I was interested in securing a few photographs of these strange and interesting birds. We noticed several large crow-like nests as we drew closer. They were built of coarse materials—twigs and driftwood. Several of the birds remained on the nests, but most of them took wing as we approached. We pulled our boat into the willows and watched the birds for a short time with our glasses. In the course of about fifteen minutes most of them had returned to the rookery. Usually both birds would return to the nest. The nests were constructed from about 10 to 20 feet above the surface of the water, and were approximately 15 to 20 inches in circumference.

The breeding adults were shiny black, giving greenish reflections, and the breast beneath the wings faded into a grayish-brown hue. The bright yellow-orange sac below the bill and other features were plainly

seen through our glasses. The rather intense heat of the day and long flights caused by our approach, seemed to increase their breathing; their mouths were opened, and we could observe the vivid blue coloration.

After some little effort, I managed to climb one of the dead willow trees and examine some of the nests. Apparently the bulk of the diet of both adults and juveniles was small fishes. From the remains in the nests I could tell it consisted, primarily, of yearling buffalo (*Megastomatobius cyprinella*) and gizzard shad (*Dorosoma cepedianum*), two common commercial species of fishes indigenous to the region. The juvenile cormorants were surely not more than a few days old; they were plump and heavy and extremely awkward.—E. B. SPEAKER, Supt. of Fisheries, Des Moines, Iowa.

Starlings Outnumber Other Birds on a Winter Drive in Southern Iowa.—Primarily to visit the Bob-white management area, on January 11, 1936, Logan J. Bennett and the author drove to Woodland, Decatur County, a distance of approximately 160 miles, and kept a count of birds seen along the way. Our first birds were six Starlings near the livestock barns of Iowa State College campus, the first Starlings to remain for a length of time on the campus. At 12 different points along the way 65 Starlings were seen; ten was the largest number in a flock. Also there were seen one Eastern Red-tailed Hawk, one Eastern Hairy Woodpecker, 21 Horned Larks at three points, five Northern Blue Jays at two points, two single Meadowlarks and seven Juncos at four points. The list totals 71 Starlings and 37 other birds. This is the first time in our experience in birding over some distance and through several hours that Starlings were more numerous than other birds. It is not known, of course, whether these Starlings were resident in the vicinities where they were seen or were migrating southward. The time of the drive was from 11 a. m. to 3 p. m., the sun shone most of the time, the temperature was slightly above freezing and the snow was about six inches deep almost all of the distance. Many trucks hauling corn and oats to Missouri had scattered grain along the highway, and this may have attracted the Starlings more than it did other birds under the snow conditions.—GEORGE O. HENDRICKSON, Iowa State College, Ames.

Horned Larks Outnumber Other Birds on a Winter Drive in Northern Iowa.—Primarily to visit a Game Management area in northern Iowa, on January 18, 1936, Logan J. Bennett and the author drove to Amund, Winnebago County, a distance of approximately 120 miles, and counted the birds along the way. An American Rough-legged Hawk and one Greater Prairie Chicken were seen in Winnebago County. Also there were seen five pheasants at three points, 534 Horned Larks at 24 points, and 92 Crows at seven points. The Crows were most numerous in the more northern counties. The time of the drive was from one to four p. m.; the sun shone most of the time but the atmosphere was quite hazy, and the temperature was considerably below freezing. The minimum reading that night in Winnebago was -18° F.—GEORGE O. HENDRICKSON, Iowa State College, Ames.

The U. S. Biological Survey (Washington, D. C.) issues an appeal for the coöperation of bird students in the Survey's work of collecting local names of birds, which are to be prepared in dictionary form later. Those who can furnish lists of these vernacular names of which there are many interesting ones in use in various localities are urged to do so. Further information in this project, if desired, will be furnished upon request to the Survey.

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—F. J. P.

Bird Notes from Story County.—On August 7, 1936, I saw a lone Great Blue Heron on Skunk River, near here. On August 25, 1936, I observed a scattered flock of hundreds of Nighthawks, flying leisurely southeast; on the same day, many Cliff Swallows were in the air, evidently migrating. Starlings have become common, as many as 100 being seen in one flock, but they seem to be less common in the fall and winter months than in the summer. Two large flocks of Snow Geese were seen flying southwest on October 13, 1936, my first record of this species. Only a dozen Red-tailed Hawks were noted during the fall migration, though the Sparrow Hawk was quite common. The first Rough-legged Hawk of the season was seen December 10, 1936. The Ring-necked Pheasant is scarce, and not one Prairie Chicken or Bob-white has been seen this season. A Meadowlark was seen January 10, 1937.—HENRY BIRKELAND, Nevada, Iowa.

A Bull-snake That Caught Young Birds.—For years I have been a nature lover. In childhood I feared the snake, but during my formal study of nature I learned that we must be unafraid of these beautiful and often beneficial reptiles. I learned that the bull-snake is a useful creature and should be protected.

In early summer a large bull-snake with distended "middle" crawled up behind me while I was hanging up clothes. Eyecing with suspicion the large section of the snake, and remembering a snake we once killed as children, which when opened produced a live frog, my curiosity got the better of mercy and I consented to have the snake killed. We performed a post-mortem and found five half-feathered baby birds, four of which looked to us like Meadowlarks. The other one had longer wings and, we believe, was a Killdeer. Five useful birds were gone, and before my mental vision passed the beautiful, singing Meadowlarks that were never to cheer the world with their sweet melodies. Henceforth, I shall not cultivate the friendship of the bull-snake!—MRS. MARTIN A. JOHNSON, Story City, Iowa.

NECROLOGY

Professor Bohumil Shimek, nationally known botanist, died at Iowa City, January 30, 1937. He was born near Shueyville, in Johnson County, Iowa, June 25, 1861, and received his education in the public schools of Iowa City and the University of Iowa. A master of science degree was granted him by the University of Iowa in 1902, and an honorary degree of doctor of philosophy was granted by the University of Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1919. He held membership in many scientific societies, including Botanical Society of Bohemia, Natural History Society of Prague, Geological Society of America, Botanical Society of America, Ecology Society of America, Iowa Academy of Science, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington Academy of Science, and the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. While primarily a botanist, his interests embraced a wide range of subjects.

He was almost equally familiar with the fields of geology, zoology and engineering and received distinction for his studies of prairie areas and plant geography and for his interpretations of the geological formations of his native state. The collections of fossils and plants assembled by Professor Shimek from various parts of the North American continent were important contributions to science. During the 46 years that he was connected with the University of Iowa, his scientific work progressed steadily. Much sought as a public speaker, he gave unsparingly of his time and reached in this way thousands of people in all walks of life. As an educator his accomplishments were of the highest. At our Cedar Rapids meeting in 1931 Professor Shimek gave an illuminating talk on the former lakes region of northwestern Iowa.—F. J. P.

RECENT BIRD BOOKS

OCTOBER FARM, by William Brewster (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1936; cloth, pp. i-xv + 1-285, 5 halftone pls.; price, \$2.50).

William Brewster, the New England ornithologist who died in 1919, maintained a home at Cambridge, Massachusetts, but he spent a good share of each year at "October Farm," his 300-acre wooded tract near the historic town of Concord in the same state. Here amid surroundings immortalized by Thoreau, Emerson, Hawthorne and the "Minute Men" of the Revolution, he spent countless happy days roaming in the fields and woods and boating on the Concord River. He did not work for a living, an inheritance enabling him to spend his life in travel and nature study. His farm was an excellent place for bird study, and it is not surprising that, having inclinations to be afield and plenty of leisure, he spent so much time here. Brewster made the most of his ornithological opportunities wherever he was. His contributions to science were numerous and he achieved an enviable reputation among the leaders in ornithology during his lifetime. October Farm always attracted him and furnished the contentment and satisfaction that he sought.

The book is made up entirely of selections from Brewster's journals which he wrote at October Farm from 1872 to 1919. His observations of birds, mammals and other wild life, faithfully studied and set down in painstaking detail, fill the volume. The literary style and narration are excellent, and the wild life studies are all of an interesting character, making a book well worth reading. Much will be learned about the hunting habits of hawks, to mention only one group of birds. We particularly liked the story of the unsuccessful pursuit of a Brown Creeper by a Shrike. Careful pruning in order to bring the journal down to book length has impaired the continuity of the journal entries, while the omission of nearly all personal matter is to be regretted. Many readers, especially newcomers in bird study, will wonder who Brewster was. An introductory sketch by Daniel Chester French gives some biographical data and will help to acquaint the reader with the man.—F. J. P.

* * * * *

WINGS IN THE BLUE, by Edwin A. Boardman (Christopher Publishing House, Boston, Mass., 1936; cloth, pp. 1-75, illustrated; price, \$2).

Bird lovers who find inspiration and entertainment in poetry will enjoy Mr. Boardman's collection of some fifty poems. The author shows a thorough appreciation of nature, and in his poems is found a pleasing combination of sentiment and description. Evidently he has made considerable study of birds in the wild state and has enjoyed his experiences to the fullest extent. His mission is to transmit this enjoyment to others through the medium of verse—a mission in which we believe he has succeeded very well. Five etchings by Frank W. Benson illustrate the book.—F. J. P.

THE ANNUAL CONVENTION—CEDAR FALLS, MAY 7-8

Our fifteenth annual meeting is to be held at Cedar Falls on Friday and Saturday, May 7 and 8. The location is especially favorable for our many members in eastern and central Iowa, and it is to be hoped that other parts of the state will also be well represented. Details of the meeting are not available when this issue is made up, but it is safe to say that it will be up to the high standard set by past conventions. Every convention is a good one! Those who attend regularly know this to be true. We urge every member to attend this year, especially new members who will attend for the first time.

Miss Winifred Gilbert is in charge of local arrangements. We are assured that several very interesting speakers will appear on the program. As usual, most of Friday will be devoted to talks and lectures on bird life, illustrated by slides and moving pictures, these sessions to be held in Gilchrist Hall on the campus of Iowa State Teachers College. The banquet will be Friday evening. The annual field trip will occupy Saturday forenoon. Good birding grounds about Cedar Falls include Fisher Lake and other regions, and groups will no doubt visit the water-bird area near New Hartford and Casebeer Heights east of Waterloo.

Not only is there excellent entertainment in prospect, but there is the opportunity to learn bird-lore from such men as M. L. Jones, Dr. Hendrickson, Walter Bennett, Logan Bennett, O. S. Thomas, O. P. Allert, Walter Rosene, Arthur Palas, Dr. Roberts, Dr. Errington, Thomas Scott and Dr. Keck—wildlife specialists, professional ornithologists and expert bird-banders.

Anyone wishing to appear on the program should communicate with Miss Gilbert at once (address I. S. T. C., Cedar Falls). We shall be glad to give you a place on the program.

Complete announcements will be sent to all members well in advance of the meeting. Make your plans to be with us on May 7 and 8.

A number of our members spent a part of the winter in other localities—Mrs. W. G. DuMont in Texas, Mrs. Mary L. Bailey in California, and George Faulkner in a trip around the world. Mr. Faulkner, a retired city mail carrier of Waterloo, makes traveling his hobby. Each winter for several years he has made a lengthy trip. He has visited Africa, South America, Central America and other parts of the world in his annual migrations.

Mrs. Toni Wendelburg of Des Moines is editing a children's page in 'Hands Across the Nation', a new garden club magazine. No doubt the birds will be given due consideration.

A complete set of 'The Iowa Ornithologist' was recently acquired by Henry Birkeland, Nevada, Iowa. This brings the total of known sets in Iowa up to seven (see list in 'Iowa Bird Life', III, pp. 27-28).

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